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ARGENTINA: ARGENTINA'S DECISION ON 31 AUGUST TO CANCEL ITS PARTICIPATION IN UNITAS XVIII, A JOINT NAVAL EXERCISE WITH THE US, REFLECTS OFFICIAL DISMAY OVER US SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES. THE ARGENTINES ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROVISIONS OF THE HUMPHREY-KENNEDY AMENDMENT HALTING ALL MILITARY COOPERATION AFTER 30 SEPTEMBER 1978 AND THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED ON THE PROSPECTIVE PURCHASE OF HELICOPTERS.4

DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS ALSO AFFECTED THE DECISION

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ON UNITAS. MILITARY HARDLINERS HAVE SEVERELY CRITICIZED PRESIDENT VIDELA FOR BEING TOO ACCOMMODATING TO RECENT US OFFICIAL VISITORS. THE HARDLINERS APPARENTLY SEIZED ON THE UNITAS-US ARMS POLICY ISSUE TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF THE PRESIDENT'S PRESTIGE. THE TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT PROBABLY IS DELIBERATELY RELATED TO VIDELA'S TRIP TO THE US NEXT WEEK. CANCELLATION AFTER THE VISIT WOULD HAVE BEEN VIEWED AS A SIGN THAT THE TRIP WAS A FAILURE. 3.5(c)

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